

## Book Reviews

**Brown, Michael F.** *Who Owns Native Culture?* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Pr., 2003. 315p. alk. paper, \$29.95 (ISBN 0674011716). LC 2003-44978.

For years, indigenous people have fought to assert their autonomy, secure their economic independence, and protect their cultural identities. One result of these battles is the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which became a law in 1990. Under this law, museums and other federal agencies are required to return cultural artifacts, human remains, and other funerary objects to culturally affiliated tribes. This was a major victory for indigenous groups. It means that the cultural items appropriated from their ancestors will be returned to their rightful owners. Moreover, it means that indigenous groups are successfully utilizing the legal system to protect their cultures.

Determining ownership of physical objects such as human remains, ceramics, or tools is challenging; determining ownership of intellectual property is even more difficult. Intellectual property rights are confusing even for contemporary, nonindigenous communities. Is it possible to own an idea? More to the point, is it possible to control who is capitalizing on an idea?

The purpose of Michael F. Brown's *Who Owns Native Culture?* is to initiate a discussion of the ethical and economic dilemmas raised when indigenous property (physical or intellectual) is claimed and circulated by nonindigenous groups. Brown, Lambert Professor of Anthropology and Latin American Studies at Williams College, uses court cases, historical documentation, and personal interviews and experiences to demonstrate the

conflicts that arise over ownership of indigenous culture. His book focuses on rights to abstract ideas, such as art, religion, ethnobotany, and other forms of tribal knowledge. It also examines the struggle over sacred sites that are on public lands. In his analysis, Brown attempts to maintain the principles of open communication necessary in a pluralist democracy; he stresses the need for civility and respect for one another.

*Who Owns Native Culture?* is a valuable resource, and Brown is effective in introducing concepts in a manner that anyone not familiar with intellectual property issues can understand. He provides extensive notes so that readers may examine for themselves how he has come to his conclusions. This book would be a wonderful tool for initiating discussion about ownership in a pluralist society.

For example, the first chapter highlights the ethical and legal dilemmas concerned with the appropriation of photographs and music. This chapter is centered on the controversial use of photographs of Hopi ceremonies and rituals made by Heinrich (Henry) V. Roth and the musical recordings of the Ojibwe that were made by Frances Densmore in the early part of the twentieth century. If these photographs and recordings had not been made, some Hopi and Ojibwe traditions and knowledge probably would have been lost, but putting this material in public domain has allowed it to be used in ways offensive to those it represents. The reader is asked to consider whether items obtained through ethically questionable means should be available to anyone. On the other hand, taking these



items out of circulation is complicated; censoring them conflicts with the right to free speech and the public domain policies in the United States. If control of their culture's intellectual property is given to the indigenous groups, how can they effectively stop its distribution? Brown offers the following insight:

There may be a place for tightly framed legislation that would oblige cultural repositories to respond to requests from native nations that specific images, music, or texts be placed in long-term quarantine. But the administrative costs of such a measure would be high and its beneficial impact limited: there is simply too much of this information available to the world at large, far beyond the control of any institution.

More important than determining ownership of specific objects, Brown argues, is a culture's control over its place in a pluralist democratic society.

Each chapter in the book is a discussion of varying conflicts concerning native cultures. The first part of each chapter gives background on actual court cases, struggles, or debates. This is followed by a discussion of legal, ethical, and historical issues in which Brown gathers various viewpoints and insights into the question of ownership and offers them up for the reader. This book includes case studies involving indigenous art, religious symbols, botanical knowledge, and the use and protection of sacred sites that are on public lands. Finally, Brown tries to define how indigenous societies fit into a pluralist democracy. The book includes a section titled "Sources on Indigenous Cultural Rights," and the author maintains supplemental Web site at [www.williams.edu/go/native](http://www.williams.edu/go/native).

*Who Owns Native Culture?* is an insightful and accessible introduction to the com-

plex discussion of intellectual property. Brown's writing is engaging and humorous; the book is well organized, easy to read, and informative. Recommended for anyone who wants to better understand the implications of intellectual property rights for indigenous groups.—Jody L. Gray, *University of Minnesota*.

*Education for Cataloging and the Organization of Information: Pitfalls and the Pendulum*. Ed. Janet Swan Hill. Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth (published simultaneously as *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*, v.34, nos. 1–3, 2002), 2002. 398p. alk. paper, cloth \$79.95 (ISBN 0789020289); paper \$49.95 (ISBN 0789020297). LC 2002-15053.

This book presents a clear examination of the current state of cataloging education, sets forth a brief synopsis of the history of education for catalogers, and explores where the future of cataloging education seems to be headed. Written mostly by educators rather than professional catalogers, the emphasis is on the lack of traditional cataloging classes in most information science curriculums and the resources available for catalogers to further their education after graduation.

The articles are, for the most part, very easy to follow, written in clear, anecdotal styles that draw the reader in, and present their cases plainly. Some articles also delve deeper with detailed analyses of statistical research supplemented by tables and charts. Each article is preceded by a summary. The book is divided into four overall sections.

The first section, "A Matter of Opinion," includes four opinion articles on the nature of cataloging and how people react to it. This was my favorite section. I found it inspiring to read the opinions of these authors, who explore the problems concerning the education of catalogers, including the trend toward more theoretic-